

Message Text

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ACTION SMI-01

INFO OCT-01 NEA-09 ISO-00 OES-03 IO-10 ABF-01 FS-01 OMB-01

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C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 4181

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SCUL, EG

SUBJECT: SMITHSONIAN/SFCP: THIRD US CONTRIBUTION TO
"INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN TO SAVE THE MONUMENTS
OF NUBIA (PHILAE) THROUGH UNESCO

REF: A. STATE 92061 B. PARIS 462 C. CAIRO 3262

1. EMBASSY BELIEVES WE SHOULD PLAN FOR THIRD USG CONTRIBUTION TO PHILAE PROJECT. FROM THIS VANTAGE POINT THERE ARE TWO ISSUES IN QUESTION: FIRST, INTRINSIC IMPORTANCE OF PHILAE TEMPLE TO ALL MANKIND WHICH PROMPTED OUR INITIAL OFFER OF SUPPORT FOR FIVE YEARS; SECOND THE MATTER OF UNESCO INVOLVEMENT. UNTIL THIS PAST YEAR THESE TWO ASPECTS WERE MUTUALLY SELF-SUPPORTING. IT IS REGRETTABLE THAT ARABS USED UNESCO FORUM TO BLACKBALL ISRAEL AND WE SHOULD, OF COURSE, CONTINUE EFFORTS TO GET THEM TO RECONSIDER. BUT THIS DOES NOT ALTER THE RECOGNIZED INTERNATIONAL WORTHINESS OF THE PHILAE PROJECT. TO BELIEVE THAT WITHHOLDING CONTRIBUTION FROM PHILAE PROJECT BECAUSE OF UNESCO DISPUTE WILL ALTER ARAB ATTITUDES IS WHISTLING IN THE DARK. IT WILL NOT. INSTEAD IT WILL SIMPLY BE A NEGATIVE FACTOR IN USG-GOE RELATIONS WHICH WE HAVE BEEN SEEKING TO DEVELOP THESE PAST EIGHTEEN MONTHS. THIS IS UNNECESSARY AND SHOULD BE AVOIDED. IN OUR VIEW, WE SHOULD REQUEST THIRD CONTRIBUTION TO PHILAE AND DO SO IN SUCH A MANNER THAT WE RETAIN OPTION OF CHANNELING ULTIMATE DISBURSEMENT OUTSIDE OF UNESCO CONTEXT, IF UNESCO PROBLEM NOT YET RESOLVED BY THEN, OR THROUGH UNESCO,
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IF IT IS RESOLVED. SOME POSSIBLE WAYS OF DOING SO ARE CITED BELOW.

2. SINCE SECOND US PHILAE CONTRIBUTION WAS MADE AS RECENTLY AS FEBRUARY 24, 1975, IT IS NOT NECESSARY TO MAKE THIRD CONTRIBUTION NOW. THIS COULD BE DEFERRED TOWARD END OF FY 76. WHAT IS IMPORTANT IS TO OBTAIN APPROVAL OF CONGRESS FOR THIRD CONTRIBUTION, WHICH WE BELIEVE SHOULD BE MADE REGARDLESS OF OUR POLICY STAND ON UNESCO FOR THE REASONS OUTLINED IN REFTEL C. PROCEDURES FOR DISBURSEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY WITH ALL NECESSARY SAFEGUARDS CAN BE DETERMINED LATER AND, OF COURSE, SUBMITTED FOR APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL CLEARANCE AS REQUIRED.

3. FOLLOWING IS DESCRIPTION OF CURRENT PROCEDURES FOLLOWED AS REQUESTED IN PARA 6 OF REFTEL A. US CONTRIBUTION IS DISBURSED IN EXCESS EGYPTIAN POUNDS TO A UNESCO ACCOUNT. THIS ACCOUNT IS ADMINISTERED BY UNESCO COMPTROLLER IN PARIS, WHO APPLIES ACCOUNTABILITY PROCEDURES. UNESCO OFFICE IN CAIRO SEES TO IT THAT EXPENDITURE REPORT FORM IS SUBMITTED QUARTERLY TO UNESCO BY EGYPTIAN GENERAL AUTHORITY FOR ANTIQUITIES. (IT SHOULD BE BORNE IN MIND THAT US CONTRIBUTION IS ONLY PART OF LARGER OPERATION WHICH INVOLVES FUNDS FOR PHILAE FROM OTHER NATIONS, PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS ETC.) COMPTROLLER'S OFFICE CONDUCTS PERIODIC CHECKS ON PROJECT AND PHILAE ACCOUNTS THROUGH VISITS TO EGYPT OR BY INSTRUCTIONS TO UNESCO, CAIRO OFFICE. PHILAE ACCOUNTS ARE PREPARED FOR REVIEW AT PERIODIC UNESCO EXCOMM SESSIONS.

4. IN RESPONSE TO SUGGESTIONS REQUESTED IN PARA 2 (A) REFTEL A, FOLLOWING OPTIONS SUGGEST THEMSELVES:

A. DIRECT US CONTRIBUTION TO EGYPTIAN GENERAL AUTHORITY FOR ANTIQUITIES AND ESTABLISHMENT OF ACCOUNTABILITY PROCEDURES BY EMBASSY. THIS WOULD INVOLVE SETTING UP SOME KIND OF COMPTROLLER ARRANGEMENT. AS DEPT AWARE, WE HAVE AN AID COMPTROLLER IN CONNECTION WITH ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAM WHO COULD PRESUMABLY HANDLE THIS.

B. ESTABLISHMENT OF SFCP GRANT UNDER SMITHSONIAN TO HANDLE DISBURSEMENT OF CONTRIBUTION WITH PROJECT MANAGER TO ASSURE FUNDING CONTROL AND ACCOUNTABILITY. AMERICAN RESEARCH CENTER EGYPT ALREADY HANDLES CERTAIN PROJECTS FOR SMITHSONIAN AS WELL AS FOR CU, FOUNDATIONS, AND UNIVERSITIES, AND WOULD BE POSSIBLE CHOICE FOR CONFIDENTIAL

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PROJECT MANAGER. AT PRESENT, HOWEVER, ARCE HAS NO ORGANIC COMPTROLLER FACILITIES AND DETAILS WOULD HAVE TO BE WORKED OUT.

5. FAILURE TO MAKE THIRD CONTRIBUTION TO UNESCO AT THIS TIME WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY HAVE IMPACT ON UNESCO EXCOMM AT ITS OCTOBER MEETING IN CAIRO WHEN PHILAE PROJECT CERTAINLY WILL BE GIVEN PROMINENT ATTENTION DURING DISCUSSIONS. ON OTHER HAND, FACT THAT CONGRESS WILL HAVE ALLOCATED FUNDS FOR THIRD PHILAE

CONTRIBUTION WILL PREVENT US FROM BECOMING TARGET OF ARAB
RECRIMINATIONS ON CULTURAL GROUNDS, SUCH AS WERE RECOMMENDED
BY ARAB LEAGUE MEETING APRIL 24 WITH RESPECT TO SWITZERLAND.
THUS, LOSS OF US SUPPORT OF UNESCO IN GENERAL BECAUSE OF ITS
POLITICIZATION WILL MAKE ITS IMPACT WITHOUT, HOWEVER, INJURING
DEVELOPMENT OF CLOSER RELATIONS WITH EGYPT WHICH CONTINUES TO BE
IMPORTANT US POLICY AIM.
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